Last year Vantage Point turned 75 and such a milestone had us digging through our archives to find out exactly what brought us from 1943 to 2018. As it turns out the answer was women.

1943 marked a turning point for our society as we found ourselves in the middle of World War II and as men went off to war, women were called upon to roll up their sleeves and keep things running. For most women, this would have been their first time entering the workforce and once they entered, you better believe they didn’t leave.

Organizing for the war effort, the Women’s Voluntary Services was formed with the goal of mobilizing women. They first developed care centres for children from England who needed shelter until placed in homes and a place where children of women working in wartime industries could receive day care. Next, they engaged women as volunteers in community agencies throughout the city.

Once the war ended, the Women’s Voluntary Services was renamed the Volunteer Bureau of Greater Vancouver and it’s first funder, the Junior League of Vancouver was charitable women’s organization who helped the Volunteer Bureau further their efforts in the swiftly changing society post-war. Continuing to be led by women, the Volunteer Bureau became the Vancouver Volunteer Centre and then Volunteer Vancouver and finally, Vantage Point.

With each iteration came women champion the efforts of volunteers in the not-for-profit sector of our city. With each decade, the work of those women in 1943 was moved forward into professional development, capacity building, and of course volunteerism always with the lens of supporting those championing environmental issues, social justice, health, arts and culture, seniors’ programs, and much more.

Since becoming Vantage Point, our Executive Directors have always been women. We are a team made up almost entirely of women (with the exception of one fellow who is a powerhouse in his own respect).

When we think of the next 75 years of Vantage Point, we have no doubts that there will be amazing female-identifying leadership to come.